VII

Greece, Palestine and India.

Is the spiritual waywardness of the West motived by a deep instinct for self-preservation and a longing for world unity? Thinking men are aware that in spite of the brilliant and historic achievements of the West, there is something wrong. Life is becoming increasingly unstable. The affirmation of the Sovereign State owing allegiance to none and free to destroy its fellows, ~~is~~ likely open to a similar fate without appeal; racial and National idolatories, the growing tyranny of wealth, the conflict between rich and poor, and the destruction of the co-operative spirit threaten the very existence of society. Insecurity of Nations and destitution of peoples together with periodic bloody revolutions, are different sides of a social order which is really primitive in character. Greek culture was born in strife - The Roman Empire was formed by a series of destructive and often savage wars. The period of the Middle Ages when Europe had the formal unity of a common religion, was a period of incessant war. Even now we have the struggle within for justice and better conditions of life and without for independence. Man has not grown worse. When Mrs Rosita Forbes visited the penitentiary at São Paulo she asked if there were any thieves among the inmates - The warden was shocked - "Oh, no," he replied, "Brazilians are very honest.

Nearly all these men are murderers." Augustine quotes with approval the reply of the pirate to Alexander the Great. "Because I do it with a little ship, I am called a robber, and you, because you do it with a great fleet, are called an emperor." The final test of every social system is the happiness and well being of men and women. The chaotic state of the world today when evil is rampant and good is trampled underfoot, is a challenge to our faith and our principles.

It is an historical fact that civilizations based on truly religious forces such as endurance, suffering, passive resistance, understanding, tolerance, are long lived, while those which take their stand on humanist elements like active-reason, power, aggression, progress, make for a brilliant display but are short lived. Compare the relatively long record of China and of India with the eight hundred years or less of the Greeks, the nine hundred years of the Romans, and the thousand years of Byzantium. Greek civilization passed away because the Greeks could not combine even among themselves because of their loyalty to the city states. The structure of the Roman Empire had ceased to exist by A.D. 500. Some scholars of the Renaissance attribute the fall of Rome to the Spread of the "superstition" of Christianity, thus echoing the cry of the Chronicler of the pagan reaction under Julian, the Apostate, the Christians to whom we owe all our misfortunes. - - - - - - - . There were many

reasons for the fall of Rome. Treason from within, quite as much as danger from without. Mr Stanley Casson writes, " The barbarian intrusions were more the consequence than the cause of her sickness. What had happened was that standards had fallen. ---- In the letters of Sidonius we hear of censorships, of political murder disguised as accident, of bribery and corruption in high places, and even of the persecution of the Jews. "(Progress & Catastrophe (1937) p. 203). "The whole world groaned at the fall of Rome" said Augustine. "The human race is included in the ruin; my tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth and sobs choke my words to think that the city is a captive which led captive the whole world;" wrote St. Jerome from his monastery in Bethlehem. To Christian and pagan alike it seemed that the impossible, the unthinkable had happened. Rome, the dispenser of destiny, the eternal city whose dominion was to have lasted forever, fell.

The Empire was broken up into two parts, the western with Rome for its capital and the Eastern with Constantinople. By the end of the 5th century the Ostrogoths had captured the whole of western and North western Europe. The Franks overran Gaul and a large part of what is now Germany. The Vandals had conquered North africa and the Visigoths had subdued Spain. The Eastern Empire was called the Byzantine because its Capital, Constantinople founded by Constantine, stood on the site of the ancient Byzantium. From its seven hills it commanded the approaches to both Europe and Asia. Its narrow straits joined East and West.

Theodosius built the great fortress and Justinian rebuilt its institutions. Nevertheless there was always the fear of attack by barbaric hordes and there were actually attacks by the Persians and the Arabs in A.D. 616, 675, 717; by the Bulgarians in A.D. 813, by the Russians in A.D. 866, 904, 936, 1043. Philosophy failed and literature languished and religion became rigid and superstitious. Before Byzantium fell to the Turks in A.D. 1453, she had succeeded in spreading in the western world the light of civilization and culture derived from Greece and Rome. And modern civilization, which took its rise after the fall of Byzantium seems to have worked itself out, for it is exhibiting today all the features which are strangely similar to the symptoms which accompany the fall of civilizations. Instead of progress in charity we have increase in hostilities. In order to live we seem to have lost the reason for living.

The Chinese and Hindu civilizations are not great in the high qualities that have made the youthful nations of the west the dynamic force they have been on the arena of world history, the qualities of ambition and adventure, of nobility and courage, of public spirit and social enthusiasm. But they have lived long, faced many crises, and preserved their identity. India for example has endured centuries of war and invasion, pestilence and human misrule. Perhaps one needs a good deal of suffering and sorrow to learn a little understanding

and tolerance. On the whole, the Eastern Civilizations are interested not so much in improving the actual conditions, as in making the best of this imperfect world, in developing the qualities of cheerfulness and contentment, patience and endurance. They are not happy in the prospect of combat. To desire little, to quench the eternal fires has been their aim. "To be gentle is to be invincible." (Lao Tze). Because the Eastern people aim at existence simplified and self sufficient, and beyond the reach of fate, if they wish to develop gentle manners which are inconsistent with inveterate habits, we need not look on them as tepid, anaemic folk, who are eager to retreat into darkness. The western races crave for freedom even at the price of conflict, while the Eastern cling to peace even at the price of subjection. A spiritual attitude to life has nurtured the Eastern cultures and given them an unfailing trust in life and a robust common sense in looking at its myriad changes.

The Eastern civilizations are by no means self sufficient. They seem today to be chaotic, helpless and incapable of pulling themselves together and forging ahead. Their peoples are wandering in their own lands lost and half alive, with an old fashioned faith in the triumph of right over might. What they have gained in insight they seem to have lost in power. They require to be rejuvenated.

East and West are both moving out of their historical past towards a way of thinking which shall eventually be shared in common by all mankind even as the material appliances are. We need today a proper

reorientation, literally the values of the world derived from the Orient, the truths of inner life. They are as essential for human happiness as outer organization. The fate of the human race hangs on a rapid assimilation of the qualities associated with the mystic religions of the East.

Today the whole world is in fusion and all is in motion. East and west are fertilizing each other, not for the first time. May we not strive for a philosophy which will combine the best of European humanism and Asiatic religion, a philosophy profounder & more living than either, endowed with greater spiritual & ethical force, which will conquer the hearts of men and compel peoples to acknowledge its sway?

II

We may well ask whether western civilization is not also based on religious values. It will be useful if we consider the exact nature of the religious life of the west and the extent of its influence on western civilization. It may be said that there are three currents which frequently cross and re-cross, which can be traced in the western religious tradition. They are the Graeco Roman, the Hebrew, and the Indian.

Graeco Roman has for its chief elements, rationalism, humanism, and the Sovereignty of the State. The spirit of speculation which questioned religious ideas, and sought to follow truth regardless of the discomfort it might cause

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ha, started with the Greeks. Xenophanes fought hard to emancipate his people from superstition and lies. Democritus found the self-existent in the atom, and Heraclitus in fire. For Protagoras man is the measure of all things, ... And as for God, he cannot be found even if he exists. For Critias, "nothing is certain except that birth leads to death and that life cannot escape ruin". According to Georgias every man was free to fix his own standard of truth. Unless Plato is wholly unfair, certain of the Sophists were prepared to justify philosophically the doctrine that might is right. Socrates was suspected & accused of impiety and corrupting the youth of Athens. Doubts run through the poetry of Euripides, the rationalism of the Stoics, the Schools of the Sceptics, and of the materialism of the Epicureans. Faith in Gods could not last when Gods were being made before men's eyes. The Ptolemies of Alexandria were freely spoken of as Gods. Julius Caesar received divine honours even in his lifetime & the day after his death the Senate decreed that he should be treated as a god. All this confirmed the Scepticism of Euhemerus that the Gods were only great men deified.

Though classical Rome was far less speculative than Greece, it produced one of the greatest sceptics of antiquity — Lucretius. He attacked religion & hurled defiance and contempt at it. In the early days of the Roman Empire, even such an

austere Stoic as Marcus Aurelius looked upon the Christian religion with fear and contempt. In the 13th century Frederick II is said to have declared that the world had been deceived by three impostors, Moses, Jesus and Mohammad. Roger Bacon was a definitely Sceptical thinker. Machiavelli in his "Prince" revived the old conception that religion is an instrument for keeping the people in subjection. He did not disguise his intense dislike for Christianity. Rabelais (1690) was impatient with asceticism & conventional religion. Friar Bacon was imprisoned as a Sorcerer because he dabbled in Science. The Scientific movement of the 16th & 17th Centuries with such names as those of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Harvey and Newton, discouraged the supernatural explanations of natural phenomena & led to the conception of the universe as a great machine working by rigidly determined laws of causation. The thrill of new discoveries & mental activities raised great expectations - Men seemed to become the lords of creation though not the heirs of heaven. While some of the leading representatives of the scientific movement ~~were not anti~~ like Descartes, Bayle, Bacon and Newton were not anti religious, the movement as a whole encouraged free thinking. The religious conflicts which followed the Reformation split the Church up into a number of Sects and disputes. Montaigne (1533-92) was nominally a Catholic but was really an Agnostic. He says - "Death is no concern

of yours either dead or alive; alive because you still are; dead because you are no longer." Leonardo da Vinci rejected every dogma that could not be tested and was a complete sceptic. And so we trace the strain of scepticism from ~~Hobbes~~ Hobbes who scorned supernaturalism and revealed religion to Voltaire and Rousseau, Leibniz and Kant who says there can be no theoretical demonstration of the existence of God, though we need Him for practical life. Herr Rosenberg in his book on "The Myth of the Twentieth Century" (1930) makes it clear he has no faith in the transcendent God of the theist: His deity is the human spirit and racial society, the Nordic race. Even Christian thinkers tried to reinterpret Christianity. The works of Strauss and Renan, Karl Marx and Nietzsche and the scientific doctrines of evolution made atheism popular. Scepticism takes many forms, modernism in religion, scientific humanism or naturalism.

III

The second current in Western religions life is the Jewish one. The great prophets were are Israel's abiding glory and their essential contribution to humanity is an ardent monotheism, the conception of the Supreme as a concrete living God whose thoughts and ways are not man's thoughts and ways. The Jews believed not in a metaphysical

attributes absolute but in a personal God [17].
eternally acting and ceaselessly interested in
His creatures, bound up with their own history.
The spirit of the West with its emphasis on reason
and exaltation of the State got confused with the
Jewish elements and prevailed over the non-
dogmatic and universal sides of the Christian
faith which started as a revolt against the
tribal and the intellectualist conceptions
of the Supreme. Christianity appealed to a
weary and heavy laden people at a time
when the political fortunes of Europe were down.
It came with healing in its wings for
souls mortally afraid of life. It caught
Europe in a mood of depression and world-
weariness and so its message that the Sun
Still Shone in heaven, though on earth it was
eclipsed, found a ~~best~~ wide welcome.
But the whole Spirit of Christianity is foreign
to the temper of Europe and though it has
been the religion of Europe all these centuries,
it has not yet been perfectly assimilated by it.
The victory of Christianity over the life of the
West has always been a remote vision &
the history of the Christian Church is the
record of the gradual adaptation of an Eastern
religion to the Western spirit. It is not the
pale Galilean that has conquered, but the
Spirit of the West.

Jesus abhorred dogma and never encouraged
the metaphysical and theological complications
which are responsible for a good deal of
casuistry, intolerance, and obscurantism.
His chief opponents were the High Priests

and the Pharisees who insisted on salvation by orthodoxy alone. But we find today in both the Catholic and Protestant forms, Christianity has become a religion of authority, finding its seat in a tradition believed to be supernaturally imparted. Though Jesus paid little attention to organization, elaborate ecclesiastical structures have emerged from his teaching. The teaching of Jesus had for its aim the making of spiritual souls who are above the battle of creeds and of Nations, but it is used to make loyal members of the Church. Religion is treated as a means for securing worldly peace & prosperity in this life & escaping hell & winning heaven in the next. It is often a national institution allied with political causes. It is employed to sanctify human passions - The garb of religion is the unseen enemy of true religion and is therefore more subtle and dangerous.

Thus by a series of basic formations a Contemplative religion becomes a dogmatic Secular one - When Rome entered into the inheritance of Alexander & established her empire, she did not interfere with their religious beliefs so long as they did not clash with the administration of the State. There was no worship common to the whole State except that of the Emperor. In course of time Christianity - which had all the qualities of a mystery religion was accepted by the people. The Church based its foundation to a God-Man and its officers claimed to derive their authority through appointment by the

founder who gathered a small group for that specific purpose. The Church was a strict
12 corporation, a secret society like that for the celebration of the mysteries called Ecclesia, with its own ~~initiation~~ initiation ceremonies, rites of sacrifice (the Eucharist) baptism, the laying on of hands and confession. All over the Empire a number of small organizations grew up, each called a church, presided over by an Episkopos or bishop. The Church as a whole included them all. Soon the Ecclesia developed a body of writings which it preserved for the instruction of its members and the continuity of doctrine. When Controversies developed it was found necessary to sift these doctrines, and so the Canon of the New Testament emerged. This included the four Gospels, a few letters written by the missionaries of the early Church, called Epistles, one record of the early Apostolic action called the Acts of the Apostles, and one work of prophetic vision known as the Apocalypse.

When the Church became a State within the State it came into conflict with the civil power. This difficulty disappeared with the conversion of Constantine, but a theological crisis arose. Arius explained the Logos in a way which provoked great opposition. He held that the Word was maker of Creation & was therefore more than man, and as the creator of all other things he could rightly be called God. The Arian Controversy split the Church and into warring factions. Unity was the essence of the

matter and dissent was not tolerated. 25

13. Athanasius opposed the idea of the created Logos and admitted that Jesus was God by nature. Faith in God-man was for him the essence of the Christian religion. The strife between Arius and Athanasius still continues in the hearts of men. Athanasius weaned the Church from her traditions of tolerance and scholarship, of Clement and Origen. Nicene orthodoxy gained victory over Hellenistic & heretical systems. Learning was lost & with it the capacity for speculation. In proselytizing the pagans Christianity absorbed many of the pagan beliefs and practices and obscured the simplicity and rationality of the faith of Jesus. In its anxiety to spread it used the language of every-race and class and country: It seemed to be all things to all men. Tenney Frank in his "Aspects of Social Behaviour in Ancient Rome (p. 63) says — "Except with regard to its fundamental tenets, it adapted itself to the needs and customs of various nations. In the famine-stricken regions of Anatolia, its preachers promised a heaven with ever-bearing fruit trees; for the over-worked Serfs in Egypt it provided refuges in monasteries; to the Berber mountaineers of Africa it gave a holy cause for the crusading especially against rich and oppressive land-owners; to educated Romans like Marcius Felix and Lactantius, it permitted the reading of Cicero and Virgil; nor did it attempt to deprive the real Greeks of Homer and Plato."

In the Dark Ages which extended from the end of the fifth century to the establishment
14. of feudalism in the eleventh century, Europe
weltered in ignorance and misery and lived
in constant peril and pressure.

In the Middle Ages, eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, faith was dominant and doubt was suppressed. Authority was supreme and the heretic was more the enemy than the infidel. The Church endeavoured by the Stake and thumbscrew to preserve the faith once delivered to the saints, and became alienated from the spirit of Jesus. This period saw the rise of the universities, parliaments and the Gothic Cathedrals, as well as the Crusades.

Philosophy in the Middle Ages was Scholasticism and the greatest of the School men was Thomas Acquinas. He attempted to reconcile philosophy with religion, Aristotelian wisdom with Catholic Orthodoxy. St. Thomas conceives reality as an ordered hierarchy of existence ranging from God, whose being is wholly from Himself, who is in no sense corporeal, and who is perfect actuality. God alone is pure being, pure Act; all other existents are individual but imperfect and owe their real but limited status to Him who alone truly is. In Him there is neither limitation nor contingency. He exists by His very essence. His being is the condition of our thinking. The existence of matter is wholly dependent on higher orders of being, its essence is pure corporeality, its natural mode is that of wholly undetermined potency. Each order of being has its own characteristic

functions and modes. We can argue from one to another only on the principle of analogy, not that of identity, and through this reasoning we can pass from sensible existence to the Source of all existence or pure being. Even though we cannot know God by the direct operations of reason, we are not altogether helpless, since analogy provides the means. If we would rise to the intelligible we must know the truth about the sensible universe which our minds are fully capable of fully apprehending. For this reason the entire Aristotelian system is taken over as a complete account of all that reason had hitherto been able to attain by the study of nature. It is only revelation which gives us the triune character of God.

5. Man is altogether different from God. On the principle of analogy it is asserted that his perfection is wholly distinct from that of the brutes or the angels. As a being composed of soul and body, man should not aim at either an animal or an angelic life. Contemplation of truth is the highest end of man & that requires bodily health, freedom from the disturbance of passions & achieved by moral virtues. The body is relevant to human perfection. It is by no means a fetter of the soul. He affirms that the beatific vision requires a beatified consciousness (lumen gloriae) which is distinct from ordinary consciousness (lumen naturale) and prophetic consciousness (lumen gratiae). Even then the divine essence will not be comprehended. On earth it is impossible for us to have a direct vision of God. A partial

knowledge of God by mental images (phantasmata) is all that can be had. If Moses and St Paul received the divine vision in their ecatasy it only shows that ecatasy is not impossible or contrary to nature. Dr Kirk says, "For lesser beings than Moses & St. Paul; such as St. Peter and David, he provides two ... kinds of ecatasy in which the contemplation of God is less remote from that which the ordinary class may hope to achieve in this life." (The Vision of God (1931) p. 392).

16

Scholasticism kept alive intellectual vigour. By its powers of definition & subtle inference and its intellectual energy, it nourished the roots of scientific culture. Copernicus is said to have conceived the hypothesis of the movement of the earth round the Sun as a mere inference from the doctrine of the Trinity. Towards the end of the Middle Ages we have an increasing knowledge of the world by science & discovery. Men were filled with vitality & the ~~love~~ spirit of adventure.

Signs of decline of faith became evident at the beginning of the fourteenth century and the authority of the Pope was contested. In the fifteenth & sixteenth centuries there was a regular reign of terror in the name of religion. The opposition expressed itself through the Reformation, & when Christendom became a house divided against itself. When Luther and other scholars rejected certain doctrines and opposed certain practices maintained by the Roman Church, they did so, taking their stand on the Scripture, especially the New Testament while the Catholic tradition gives us an infallible interpretation of an

infallible Book, the Protestant Churches
17 speak in an uncertain voice and give a hundred different answers.

Calvin erected a new Church with a well developed doctrine. The divine will is supreme. The sovereignty of God and the predestination of man were Calvin's chief doctrines. Calvinism provided the framework of the new Protestant movement which spread over Europe, almost for a time dominating England, and becoming the established system in Scotland.

In religion, hatred of Catholic and Protestant grew up. Wars of religion increased. The savageries of the Inquisition and the massacre of St. Bartholomew and the intrigues of religious teachers such as Luther, Calvin and Knox showed how religiously Christians could hate one another simply because they bore different labels.

Today Fundamentalism has arisen — New dogmatisms have come in to being which would rehabilitate the authority of gospel, Church or Creed & effectively quench the Spirit. We have in Karl Barth a crusader and a fundamentalist. For him humanism and modernism are heresies. He refuses to compromise with modern thought or to bring Christianity "up to date". "It is forced down my throat", he says, "that the Dogmatic theologian is under the obligation to 'justify' himself in his utterances before philosophy. To that my answer is likewise, No ----". For Barth it is a disservice to religion to try to illuminate it by arguments from philosophy. The proper duty of the theologian is to see how

for the proclamations of the Church are in conformity with Scripture - "Holy Scripture is the object of our study, and at the same time the criterion of our study of the Church's past." Barth declares that Christianity cannot lay claim to supernatural truth so long as it tries to compromise with humanism liberalism, psychology and philosophy of religion.

A welter of superstitions and taboos, primitive myths and unhistorical traditions, unscientific dogmatisms & national idolatries, constitutes the practising religion of the vast majority of mankind today.

III.

The mystic tradition has been a persistent one in the religious life of the west. Its origins as we have seen may be traced to India. Professor F. Heiler observes that — "the history of religion knows only three great independent currents of development, which may possibly go back to two - There runs an unbroken chain from the Atman - Brahman mysticism of the Vedic Upanisads to the Vedic Vedanta of Samkara on the one side and on the other through the mystical technique of the Yoga System to the Buddhist doctrine of Salvation." He distinguishes two types of religion, the mystic and the prophetic, or the Biblical and the evangelical. The former he traces to India, though he recognises that in Indian thought there is a theistic current, which refuses to blur the distinctiveness of individuals and looks upon God not only as immanent but transcendent & advocates prayer and appeal to the Infinite instead of quiet contemplation.

The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad and the
Bhagavadgītā, the theistic reformers
19. such as Ramanuja and Madhva,
and saints such as Tukārām, Tulsidas,
rest represent this tendency. Yet the other
tendency is the more prominent one and
Christian mysticism owes to it a good deal
of its development. It need not however
be assumed that the two are exclusive
of each other. As a matter of fact the
Upanisads do not look upon them as
irreconcilable. Dr Inge in his "Christian
Mysticism" refers to the mystic strain in
the early thinkers. He, however, agrees with
Heiler in looking upon the negative descriptions
of the deity & the world denying character &
ethics as Indian in origin. These are
pervasive characteristics of Christian
mysticism and show the decisive
influence of Indian thought on it. To give
a negative account of God is to deny affirm
His immensity of being. When personality is
denied to Him it is only in the interests
of super-personality. When we are asked
to recognize the ephemeral character of
earthly goods, it is to help us to live in
the light of the eternal values. This is the
lesson of the Upanisads and the Bhagavadgītā.

There is thus enough justification for
regarding the mystic element in the west
as Indian. In ~~different~~ different places
and times and under the shadow of every
religion, Mysticism has developed. In India
Mysticism this universality is openly
acknowledged and a philosophy of

religion is built on it. It affirms that the strain of mysticism is everywhere latent in humanity and only requires favouring conditions to reveal itself. Today when we are breaking away from incredible beliefs and unsocial traditions, mysticism has a deep appeal to the spiritual-minded.

Science cannot minister to the needs of the soul nor can dogmatism meet the needs of the intellect. Atheism and dogmatism, scepticism & blind faith are not the only alternatives. They are the twin fruits on the same branch, the positive and negative poles of the same tendency. We require a religion which is both scientific and humanistic. Religion, Science and humanism were sisters in ancient India; they were allies in Greece. They must combine today if they are to attract all those who are equally indifferent to organized religion and atheism, to super naturalism and nihilism. We need a spiritual home where we can live without surrendering the rights of reason or the needs of humanity.

Reverence for truth is a moral value. It is dearer than Buddha or Jesus. Truth is opposed, not to reason or the Greek spirit, but to dogma and fossilized tradition. We cannot rest the case of religion any more on dogmatic Super naturalism.

Mysticism takes its stand on verifiable truth and not on the correct solution of credal puzzles. The code of ethics

adopted by mysticism is noble and austere. It insists that suffering and renunciation are the life blood of religion. In the splendid phrase of Wilamowitz; we must give our blood to the ghosts of our ideals that they may drink and live. The world accepting suggestions of religions can be easily incorporated in our codes, but the stark element of world renunciation is supremely difficult & we are only too ready to make any shifts and adopt any expedients to eliminate it. Spinoza concludes his "Ethics" with the following passage:— "The wise man is scarcely at all perturbed in spirit, but being conscious of himself and of God, and of things, by a certain eternal necessity, never ceases to be, but always possesses true acquiescence of his spirit. If the way, which I have pointed out as leading to this result seems seems exceedingly hard, it may, nevertheless be discovered. Needs must it be hard since it is so seldom found. ----- All things excellent as as difficult as they are". Mysticism finds itself in conflict with all those tendencies which put authority above truths and nation above humanity. It looks upon them as a menace to spiritual life & civilization and by acquiescing in them we help what is evil to consolidate itself. So it protests often passionately and indignantly against abuses of organized religions. It revolts against institution — alism and stereotyped forms of

religious life. The mystics of all religions have at some point or other in their careers, protested against outside authority, credal bonds and spiritual dictatorships.

There is a great European tradition of mysticism which starts from the mystery religions of Greece and develops through Pythagoras and Plato, Alexandrian religious philosophy, Jesus, Paul and John, Clement and Origen, the Neoplatonists, the medieval Christian mystics, the Cambridge Platonists and scores of others. "The mystics form an invisible brotherhood scattered through all lands and times; though separated by space and time they reach hands to each other and agree in saying that God and man are separated only in outer appearance, both are indissolubly one. In spiritual transport they utter the great mystical prayer — "I am Thou and Thou art I." (Heiler — Prayer. E.T. p. 191.).

Mysticism is latent in the world's subconsciousness. It is what all sincere people dream of but what earth hath not yet known. The modernists in every religion are preparing the way for it. Ernst Troeltsch and Dr Inge declare that Christianity, if it is to be saved from formalism & excessive institutionalism, must return to the mystic standpoint. It is unfortunate however, that when mysticism is coming into its own, a theologian of the eminence of Karl Barth, regarded by some as the "Church's greatest living thinker",

should remain a stranger to its true
Spirit and implications. Barth contends
23 that we are in the region of the subjective
in mystic experience and God as the
Objective will always remain on the other
side of experience. So long as we insist in
experience, Barth tells us we have in the
place of God, the "questionable figment of
our thoughts." Brunner in his "Theology
of Crisis" distinguishes three modes of
apprehension: the scientific which deals
with external facts; the metaphysical
which is concerned with underlying
principles; and a third mode, "when one
no longer seeks with Philistine concern
for practical values; when one seeks not
with cold scientific objectivity, or with
a serene aesthetic outlook upon the world,
but with the passion of a drowning man
who desperately cries for help. It is the
burning quest of the total personality in
which the mystic also lays stress.

Barthian theology insists on a
Second birth, and this is preserved in
the mystic religion as well. Even as we
were born into our temporal life, we must
be "born again" into the life of spirit. We
can be reborn into eternity while in time.
"The soul must be turned about" if the rays of
the true light are to fall upon it.

The negative descriptions of the Supreme
and the doctrine of Māyā which
are said to be the characteristics
of Hindu mysticism are employed

to denote the distance between time and eternity, between appearance and reality. God is the unknown, the absolutely different, the Beyond who cannot be comprehended by our concepts or recognized by our understanding. "God is ever transcendent to man, new, remote, foreign, surpassing, never in man's sphere, never man's possession: who so says God, says miracle." (Karl Barth. The Epistle to the Romans - E.T. by Sir Edwyn Hoskyns. (1933) p. 21). (See also p. 315).

24 As God is the totally other, knowledge of God must come from God himself. The Upanisad says — "He whom the Self chooses, by him the Self can be gained". The power of truth is identical with God Himself. The disclosure of this gift is a free gift. It is God's own choice. The only way in which we can prepare for it is by sacrificing our life and all, by ~~stripping~~ standing stripped and naked before God. Unless the individual is wholly impoverished he cannot earn his saving. The one cry of the man who has an apprehension of the Absolute and his own distance from it, is that he is a sinner, pāpo'ham. Religion is born in agony. When man feels this utter isolation he is miserable. But this tragedy is also the glory of man. The very ability of man to receive and retain an impression of God's revelation, his struggle to give visible expression to the divine life, is the proof of the God in him. When we feel our difference from God, it is His transcendence that strikes us. The mystic while acknowledging the utter transcendence of

God, will not agree that man is utterly depraved and utterly incapable of getting back to God. How else can we account for the joy of religious experience of the prophet and the apostle, of the seer and the Saint who feel they are new ones, with the duality of their life dissolved? Barth describes it in glowing terms — "There is here no fear, for perfect love has cast it out ——— There is dissolved the terrible weight which infinity imposes on what is finite. ——— The Spirit which we have received and by which we have passed from death to life, brings this duality to an end."

The Upanisad says brahmābhayam, there is no fear in God. When the vision is attained duality is at an end. "God Himself and God only." Eternity and time, "immortality and death" says the Mahābhāratha, "the two together are found in the human being; by delusion we enter into death; by the pursuit of truth we gain life eternal." Human life is complex, it is both confusion and clarity, sinfulness and hope. When the Upanisads speak of "That Thou art" they do not mean that we are divine in an easy and obvious way: they assert that divinity is the manifest destiny of man. "That thou shalt become" with effort and struggle when you shake off your ego. The death of the rebellious ego is the condition of the

birth of the Son of God. If there are no crucifixions, there can be no resurrections.

The mystic would agree that ~~that~~ creeds and dogmas ~~are~~ are not fate but lead to fate. "words are weariness" as the Upanisad says, if they do not transfigure us. The Spiritual cannot be achieved by the ethical. Nāsty akritah Kritena, - all work is dust and ashes for Sankara. Salvation by works is impossible for all action is empirical and cannot have transcendental consequences. While all this emphasizes the distance between the empirical and the transcendental, the mystic religion affirms that there is a relation between the two. We can pass from time to eternity, from appearance to reality, otherwise there is no point in such e passages as "Be ye holy even as I am holy" or "Be ye perfect."

Barth holds that God creates crises in the lives of men and the affairs of man kind. The Logos constitutes the personality of Jesus; Virgin Birth and Resurrection become all important. As to why Jesus took over human nature and died on the Cross, it is a mystery unfathomable by man. God stands outside the process and calls men according to His purpose. The almighty irrevocably decided the fate of each individual long before he called them

into existence & has predestined millions to his hatred and to eternal damnation with that object he gave them being.

This despair of human nature which underlies Barthian theology is the reflection of the social situation. For the blind faith of the materialists, Barth substitutes the over ruling providence of God. Such a view persuades us to believe that everything that happens is divine, and for effecting changes in the world we have to wait for miracles. What the age needs is faith in a Kingdom which is not of this world, where life consists not in meat and drink, but in righteousness, peace and joy. With all its ascetic and other worldly emphasis, mysticism is more adequate to the facts of religious experience and social needs than Barthian theology.

Every attempt of the historical religions to regain universalism, is bringing them nearer to India. The increasing interest in Indian religions is due to the consciousness that mysticism has had a more successful chance in them. That it originated in India is now practically admitted. That it influences the western tradition is not denied by the learned. If thousands of the more open-minded among Christians and Agnostics, find that these new ideas from the East, have more power to quicken their religious aspirations, it is a matter for rejoicing. Max Muller declared

that if he were asked from where we may draw that "corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human, a life, not for this life alone but a transfigured and eternal life, again I should point to India. Perhaps Christianity may find her rebirth today in the heritage of India.

The coming together of two great civilizations not so widely separated in some of the main sources of their strength. has caused some harsh spiritual discords political tragedy and personal agony. It has, however unrivalled opportunities for the shaping of the future. Indian life & thought have been transformed & her mind has been given a new direction. Her political subjection has not completely deprived her of her soul. Lord Lindlithgow said — "Perhaps the West will find in India's more general emphasis on simplicity and the ultimate spirituality of things, a more positive example of the truths which the most advanced minds of the West are now discovering ——— ".